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vice has nothing of the spectacular about it and is too little regarded by the general public, for only on the basis of such painstaking investigation can a sound constructive public policy be built. The present study is especially timely not only for Massachusetts in showing her her problem before she has a developed "evil" to combat but equally sounds a warning and sets an example to other industrial states facing similar economic tendencies.

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*The Relation of Irregular Employment to the Living Wage for Women.* By IRENE OSGOOD ANDREWS. Prepared for the New York Factory Investigation Commission in coöperation with the American Association on Unemployment. Fourth Report of the New York Factory Investigating Commission, Vol. II, pp. 497-635. (Albany. 1915.)

*Unemployment among Women in Department and Other Retail Stores of Boston.* Bulletin of the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, No. 182. (Washington. 1916. Pp. 72.)

*Regularity of Employment in the Women's Ready-to-Wear Garment Industries.* Bulletin of the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, No. 183. (Washington. 1916. Pp. 155.)

These three studies show the difficulties connected with the promotion of the ends sought by the minimum wage laws which have been enacted in eleven states. Mrs. Andrews' well-organized compilation of material found in previous investigations, the Labor Bureau study of pay-rolls representing 150,000 workers in 500 establishments engaged in what is generally recognized as a seasonal trade, as well as the intensive study of one occupation where employment has been believed to be fairly regular, all produce evidence showing that more menacing evils than the inadequacy of the weekly wage are in need of attention. As the policy of retaining competent workers on part-time is generally adopted, many industries in which women are largely employed show seasonal fluctuations not alone in the numbers engaged but also in the amounts earned by those kept on the pay-rolls. Nor is irregularity of employment the only serious condition revealed by these studies. The amazing amount of shifting from one industry to another must promote the inefficiency that justifies the arguments of those economists who insist that it is impossible to enforce the payment of an unearned wage. Yet thorough training

is not always a guarantee of regular employment, for the most highly skilled of the garment trades suffer most from fluctuations in the demand for their products.

In the Boston study the pay-roll evidence was supplemented by home visits to 1763 women employed in the retail stores covered in the investigation. It was found that only 2.9 per cent of those employed both as regulars and extras; and 1.1 per cent of those working as regulars only were not dependent on their earnings for the necessities of life. While 90 per cent were living as members of family groups, it was evident that the loss of their contributions would result in a lowering of the standard of living of these groups. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to enforce a minimum wage sufficient to provide for the long intervals of idleness to which the extra department store workers and the regular employees in many other trades are subject.

These studies are intended to be only preliminary to the constructive work necessary for the solution of the most difficult and menacing problems of our present industrial order, yet some attempts are made at suggesting remedies. It is shown that dovetailing of industries will bring but slight relief, as there is little tendency for the fluctuations to supplement each other. Something might be gained by the education of the ultimate consumer. Mrs. Andrews urges the withdrawal for educational training of the shifting group of younger workers, in the hope that the absence of an easily accessible supply of seasonal workers might force the employers to better organization. The larger garment-making establishments combine several forms of output in order to carry their heavy overhead charges. Evidently there is no panacea for the evils of irregular employment; remedies must be carefully adapted to the needs of each industry.

The social significance of the irregularity of employment of women is realized more fully when one considers that our last census shows that in the eight largest cities of the United States over half of the women are wage-earners during the period prior to the age of marriage (14 to 21), and from one fourth to one third are at work during adult life. It is evident that the minimum wage is but one of the simpler methods of approaching the subject, and that the task of safeguarding the future of the race by protecting the wage-earning women will involve other complex and far-reaching reforms in both education and industry.

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